

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

A replacement formal drawing of Figure 6 is submitted concurrently herewith under a separate cover letter.

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Initially, please note that item "AO" of the PTO 1449 form which was filed as part of the Information Disclosure Statement of April 9, 2004 was not initialed. Thus, Applicants hereby request that the Examiner return a copy of the above-mentioned PTO form 1449 having an initial for each identified reference.

The specification and abstract have been reviewed and revised to improve their English grammar. The amendments to the specification and abstract have been incorporated into a substitute specification and abstract. Attached are two versions of the substitute specification and abstract, a marked-up version showing the revisions, as well as a clean version. No new matter has been added.

A proposed drawing amendment is submitted herewith under a separate cover letter. Specifically, Figure 6 has been amended to replace the term "UPDATA" with the term "UPDATE" in steps S101 and S102. This drawing amendment is editorial in nature and does not add new matter to the application.

Claims 2, 3 and 5 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

Further, claims 1, 4, 6-16 and 18-20 have been amended to make a number of editorial revisions thereto. These editorial revisions have been made to place the claims in better U.S. form. Further, these editorial revisions have not been made to narrow the scope of protection of the claims, or to address issues related to patentability, and therefore, these amendments should not be construed as limiting the scope of equivalents of the claimed features offered by the Doctrine of Equivalents.

In addition, independent claims 1 and 20 have been amended to include limitations similar to those recited in cancelled dependent claims 2 and 3 which further distinguish the claimed invention from the references cited in the rejections discussed below.

Claims 1, 2, and 6-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by

Stephens et al. (U.S. (2003/0095524). Further, claims 3-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stephens in view of Meade, II et al. (U.S. 2002/0140966). These rejections are believed clearly inapplicable to amended independent claims 1 and 20 and the claims that depend therefrom for the following reasons.

Amended independent claim 1 recites an apparatus for managing (and storing) service-related information in a system having a plurality of electronic apparatuses which work in liaison with each other to implement a service. Claim 1 recites that the apparatus includes a request reception section for (1) receiving search requests from the electronic apparatuses of the system. Further, claim 1 recites that the apparatus includes a search section that, (2) in response to the search request from the electronic apparatuses, searches (3) the service-specific information (stored in the apparatus), which includes information related to an application that is operable on each of the electronic apparatuses which implement the service. Finally, claim 1 recites an update notification section for notifying (4) the electronic apparatuses of the system that an updated version of the application (that is operable on each of the electronic apparatuses which implement the service) exists, if, based on the search result (of the search initiated by the electronic apparatuses), the information related to the application (of the stored service-specific information) indicates that an updated version of the application is available.

The 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of dependent claims 3-5 relies on Meade for teaching the features of the update notification section, which are now recited in amended independent claim 1. However, the Stephens and Meade references, or any combination thereof, fail to disclose or suggest the above-mentioned distinguishing features (1)-(4) recited in independent claim 1.

Rather, Meade merely teaches that a single cartridge of a printer: (1) contains updated software (or a link to updated software) and triggers the printer to display a message to a user that updated software (or a link) for the printer is stored in the cartridge (**first embodiment**); or (2) contains a version number, such that the printer compares a version number of the software currently being used by the printer with the version number stored in the cartridge, and if the version number of the cartridge is newer than the version number of the software currently being used by the printer, then the printer will request an update (**second embodiment**) (see paragraphs

[0007], [0008], and [0009]).

Thus, in view of the above, it is clear that the first embodiment of Meade teaches that the cartridge contains updated software and triggers the printer to notify the user, but does not disclose or suggest the information management apparatus for receiving search requests from the electronic apparatuses of the system and, in response to the search request from the electronic apparatuses, searches the service-specific information (stored in the apparatus) and provides an update notification if an updated version of an application exists, as required by claim 1. In other words, Meade does not disclose or suggest that the electronic apparatus (to receive the update) initiates a search for the update, as required by claim 1. On the other hand, Meade merely teaches that the cartridge which provides the update initiates the update process by notifying the printer of the availability of the update.

In addition, in view of the above, it is apparent that the first embodiment of Meade teaches that a single cartridge interfaces with a single printer to accomplish an update, if necessary, but does not disclose or suggest that a plurality of electronic apparatuses request a search, and based on the search, the claimed information management apparatus provides an update notification to each of the electronic apparatuses for which an updated application to implement the services exists, as required by claim 1.

Moreover, it is evident that the second embodiment of Meade teaches that the printer compares a version of the software currently being used with a version of software indicated by the cartridge, but fails to disclose or suggest that electronic apparatus (to receive the update) initiates a search for the update and receives a notification from the claimed information management apparatus if an update exists, as recited in claim 1. In other words, Meade teaches that the printer to receive the update determines whether or not an update is necessary, but does not disclose or suggest the information management apparatus which receives information from the electronic apparatuses and based on the received information determines whether or not an update is available for each of the electronic apparatuses, as required by claim 1.

Please note that one of the benefits of the invention recited in claim 1 is that that, based on a search request from a plurality of electronic apparatuses of a system, the (single) information management apparatus provides update notifications to each apparatus of the system.

Further, this arrangement provides an increased efficiency in updating electronic apparatuses which are eligible for an update. In light of the discussion above, it is clear that Meade does not provide such a result, as discussed above. Therefore, because of the above-mentioned distinctions it is believed clear that claim 1 and claims 4 and 6-19 which depend therefrom would not have been obvious or result from any combination of Stephens and Meade.

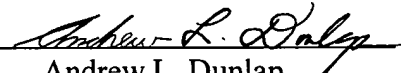
Furthermore, there is no disclosure or suggestion in Stephens or Meade, or elsewhere in the prior art of record which would have caused a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify Stephens and/or Meade to obtain the invention of independent claim 1. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 1 and claim 4 and 6-19 which depend therefrom are clearly allowable over the prior art of record.

Amended independent claim 20 recites a method which includes features that correspond to the above-mentioned distinguishing features of independent claim 1 (e.g., searching and update notification). Thus, for the same reasons discussed above, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 20 is allowable over any combination of Stephens and Meade.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance and an early notification thereof is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Takahiro WATANABE et al.

By: 
Andrew L. Dunlap
Registration No. 60,554
Attorney for Applicants

ALD/lkd
Washington, D.C. 20006-1021
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
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